

May 20, 2015

Mary Flanderka
Habitat Protection Supervisor,
Wyoming Game and Fish Department
5400 Bishop Blvd.,
Cheyenne, WY 82006

Dear Mary,

My name is James Eklund. I was born and raised on a ranch in Johnson County, Wyoming and have been ranching the land for my entire life. My ranch land and homestead is located in Township 46 North, Range 80 West, Johnson County, Wyoming, which is within an area currently designated as Core Population Area for Greater Sage Grouse. I have provided a map (enclosed) of my ranch in relation to the current and proposed Core Population Area as discussed in this letter for your review.

As part of the recent review and reconsideration of the Core Population Area, it was recommended by Dan Thiele, a Wyoming Game and Fish Department Wildlife Biologist, that a large section of the Core Population Area be removed from the area south of Buffalo, including the removal of my land from the Core Population Area. His recommendation, based on his scientific review of the area, concluded that the proposed area for removal was unsuitable habitat for sage grouse and does not include any known sage grouse leks; therefore, keeping the area designated as Core Population Area will have little to no sage grouse protection benefits. Despite the clear consensus at the local working group meeting that the area should be removed, the Sage Grouse Implementation Team (SGIT) mapping committee voted against removing the area from the Core Population Area.

I strongly disagree with the SGIT mapping committee's recommendations to leave this area in the Core for the following reasons:

- As confirmed by WGFD staff, there is very little sage brush or other suitable grassland habitat for sage grouse on my ranch. Furthermore, my ranch land is not being utilized by sage grouse nor has it been for numerous years. Therefore, there is no biological basis for the Core Population Area designation on my ranch.
- Designation as Core Population Area diminishes the value of my ranch and the underlying minerals and greatly restricts my ability to develop and use my lands as I see fit. As the owner of both the surface and the minerals on my ranch, I should have nearly absolute discretion on how I utilize my lands. However, due to the Core Population Area designation, my development and use of my ranch is subject to intensive government intervention. While this would be troubling and disagreeable if there were sage grouse actually present on the land, it is absolutely unacceptable given the complete lack of sage grouse anywhere near my ranch.

- Finally, I have never been given notice of the inclusion of my land in the Core Population Area. Therefore, the government is effectively taking away my property rights without even the slightest notion of due process of law. The Governor has issued an Executive Order subjecting my private land to vast governmental oversight without providing the basis of his statutory authority to do so, and without meeting even the most minimal notice and comment requirements.

Based on my reasons briefly described above, I strongly request that the Wyoming Sage Grouse Implementation Team follow the recommendations of its own staff and the consensus of the local meeting group and remove my ranch from the Core Population Area. Thank you.

Sincerely,



James C. Eklund
Managing Member

Eklund Family Land Limited Partnership
PO Box 323
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